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REVIEWS

Races and Immigrants in America. By JOHN R. COMMONS, professor of political economy, University of Wisconsin. New York: Macmillan, 1907. Pp. xiii+242.

It is difficult to give anything but a frankly unfavorable review of this book, unless it be judged as a popular work or as a mere introduction to the subjects of which it treats. To discuss the racial and immigration problems of the United States within the limits of a volume of a little over 200 pages with anything like scientific adequacy is manifestly impossible. What should require several volumes Professor Commons has attempted to accomplish in a single volume, and a very brief one at that. Nowhere does the author explain the purpose of the book, and the reader is left to decide for himself by what standards it should be judged.

Judged by the standards of exact scholarship the work is deficient in many respects. It is particularly deficient on the biological and anthropological sides. The term "race" is especially loosely used, though the author justifies this by saying that the ethnographers use it in the same way, disregarding the fact that this is not the best usage. He says, for example, "Mankind in general has been divided into three and again into five great racial stocks, and one of these stocks, the Aryan or Indo-Germanic, is represented among us by ten or more subdivisions which we also term races." To say nothing of the doubtful propriety of speaking of an Aryan race, there is here the additional impropriety of identifying the Aryans with one of the "five great racial stocks of mankind," presumably the white race, though later the author speaks of the Semitic race as distinct from the Aryans. This is merely an illustration of the ethnological inaccuracies throughout the book. In general the ethnological basis of the discussion is inadequate or inaccurate, judged from a scientific standpoint. The biological aspects of the immigration problem likewise are inadequately considered.

While the standpoint of the author is mainly economic and political, rather than biological and sociological, still it cannot be

said that even the economic and political aspects of immigration receive as full treatment as one could desire. One general thesis of the author, that race antagonism springs from economic competition, is not supported by sufficient evidence. While economic competition undoubtedly intensifies race antagonism, still the researches of race psychologists' have shown it to be quite independent of economic conditions in the narrow sense; and this the author also practically acknowledges in his references to the relations between the Indians and the whites.

On the other hand, if the work is judged as a semi-popular one, or as a brief introduction to the subjects of which it treats, there is much to be said in its favor. While not profound, it is a brief and concise treatment of serious public problems, and is characterized by the good judgment and general sanity which are evident in Professor Commons' works in general. The general point of view and conclusions of the book are undoubtedly sound, and it will serve a useful purpose in introducing to many the serious study of our racial and immigration problems. To one who can spend but a brief time in reading along the line of these problems, but who wishes a general survey of them all, there is no book that can be more heartily commended.

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The Psychology of Religious Belief. By JAMES BISSETT PRATT, PH.D., assistant professor of philosophy in Williams College. New York: Macmillan, 1907. Pp. xii+327.

The sociologist should be deeply interested in the scientific study of religious beliefs and practices; for, as has been frequently pointed out, the history of a civilization is often largely but the life-history of a particular religion. The above work is certainly among the most valuable of recent studies of religion on the psychological side. It is an attempt to interpret religious beliefs upon the basis of the new functional psychology. It seeks the springs of such typical religious beliefs as the belief in God and in immortality, in the life of feeling and instinct. The book certainly throws considerable light upon the psychological genesis of these beliefs in the race, and in the individual. On the whole the author reaches practically the same conclusion as H. R. Marshall,¹ namely, that

¹ See his *Instinct and Reason*.